



FENCING
I R E L A N D

New Refereeing Structures Information for Clubs

Introduction

Earlier this year Fencing Ireland launched a new initiative to deliver our Level 1 refereeing courses and qualifications entirely online.

Alongside this, we are actively taking steps to grow and strengthen our cohort of referees and to improve the culture and level of organisation surrounding refereeing in Ireland. It is Fencing Ireland's goal that, in a few years, Ireland will no longer rely on 'self-refereeing' at competitions, especially at our higher level 'National Circuit' events.

To these ends, we are reviewing our referee training structure and introducing a number of refereeing policies and initiatives.

This document provides the necessary details for fencing clubs regarding the new policies. The most prominent change will be that, in a system similar to the one used in FIE events, clubs will be required to provide referees for competitions based on the number of fencers from that club entering events.

If you are a club who organises competitions, please also read the document for 'competition organisers'.



Clubs' responsibilities to provide referees to competitions

From the start of the 2022/23 season, fencing clubs in Ireland will be asked to organise for one qualified referee to be present for the duration of a weapon event for every four fencers that club has entered in that event.

For example, if your club enters four women's foilists into the East of Ireland Open, the club will have to provide a qualified foil referee for the women's foil event. If, however, your club enters two women's foilists and two men's foilists, that will not require the provision of a referee as those four entries are split across two events. If your club enters between eight and eleven people to an event, you will be required to provide two referees, and so on.

The following practical rules will also be necessary and will be introduced alongside the refereeing rule:

- If a club does not provide referees when required, Fencing Ireland will be levying a penalty fine of €100 on the club for each referee not provided. Fencing Ireland reserves the right to take more serious steps to address the issue if a club or clubs systematically do not engage with the system but we hope this will not be necessary.
- A referee will only be deemed 'qualified' if they hold a Fencing Ireland approved refereeing qualification in the weapon they are present to referee. The referee provided does not necessarily have to be a member of your club to act as a referee provided by your club.
- Competition organisers will be asked to close normal entry for competitions at least a week before the event. It is at this stage that the calculation will be made of how many referees clubs must send. This means that you will always have at least a week in which to organise referees. If competition organisers wish to accept entries after this standardised closing date, they may do so but will be asked to charge a higher later entry fee. Fencers who enter after the standardised closing date will not count to a club's entry total for the purposes of providing a referee.
- Nominated referees may not be taking part in any event as fencers on the same day.
- The nominated referee must be a qualified referee who is not already registered to referee for that event/day.

Weapons testing

It is our intention that ranked competition in Ireland will be more consistent in weight and gauge testing foils and épées at each round of competitions (at the start of poules and before every DE match).

Please ensure that your club members are aware of this and will be prepared to have their weapons checked at future events.

What your club can do now

As the new refereeing system is not coming in until the beginning of the 2022/23 season, you have time to plan and prepare to meet the new requirements. At this stage you should look to:

- Encourage your members to get qualified as referees
- Gather information from your members to ascertain who would be willing to referee at events when needed

Encouraging systematic weapon testing will begin immediately. If you provide equipment to fencers for competitions, you should ensure that the equipment is of sufficient standard and that the fencers know how to repair the common issues associated with failures of weight and gauge tests.

Our drive to train and develop more referees should increase the level of refereeing in Ireland in a number of ways. This will include a more consistent application of the rules and use of penalty cards for infractions of those rules - you should ensure that your club members have a working knowledge of rules so that the more consistent application of those rules does not cause unexpected issues for your fencers.